

National Safe Boating Week Media Release

We would like to thank you for helping us spread the word about safe boating during National Safe Boating Week (May 16-22) and throughout the boating season. National Safe Boating Week is a national effort to increase safe boating awareness prior to the unofficial start of summer- Memorial Day.

Boating is serious fun! The DEEP is encouraging boaters to get out and enjoy on our waters as often as possible – but to take all precautions to be safe and to minimize your impact on our natural resources.

The following pages offer topics for each day of National Safe Boating Week and some opportunities to take some live shots, interview people in the boating field, and/or record some interviews for your use.

If you have any questions about the topics or events, please contact Wendy Flynn of the DEEP Boating Division at gwendolynn.flynn@ct.gov or 860-447-4339.

Day 1--National Safe Boating Week

Life Jackets- May 16, 2015

Laws

- Connecticut requires that each person on board a vessel have a life jacket that is properly sized, in good condition and is readily accessible.
- Vessels that are 16 feet and over must have at least one US Coast Guard approved Type IV throwable device (i.e. Cushion or horseshoe buoy) available for immediate use on board in addition to the required wearable life jackets.
- Children that are under age 13, must wear their life jacket while underway unless the child is below deck or in an enclosed cabin.
- All persons must wear their life jacket at all times when:
 - underway on a manually propelled vessel (i.e. kayaks, canoes, standup paddleboards, rowboats) from October 1st through May 31st.
 - on a personal watercraft (PWC)
 - waterskiing or being towed in other water sports
- Boaters must be age 16 and older to be able to legally wear an Inflatable life jacket. Inflatable life jackets are not approved to wear when waterskiing or on a PWC.

General Information

- Wearing a life jacket is a practice that is crucial to providing protection on the water and is one that more adults need to adhere to.
- 90% of all Connecticut deaths from drowning on the water involved a person who was not wearing a life jacket and may have survived if worn.
- Today's life jackets are comfortable, attractive and wearable.
- The vessel operator is responsible for ensuring that each person on board the vessel has a wearable, proper fitting, and accessible life jacket prior to departure.
- Choosing a life jacket that is designed for the activity can enhance your comfort and safety.
- "Wear It Connecticut" is part of a national campaign that encourages boaters to wear their life jacket whenever they are on the water.
- "Ready, Set, Wear It", is an annual national event that takes place on the first day of National Safe Boating Week to educate people about the importance of wearing life jackets and attempts to set the world record for the number of people wearing them. In 2014, there were 175 events worldwide with 6,973 participants. Of these participants, 5,430 were wearing inherently buoyant life jackets, 1,543 were wearing inflatable life jackets and 49 dogs wore their life jackets.

Photo Op:

1. Activity: live demonstrations- inspecting life jackets, recharging inflatable life jackets, and properly fitting a life jacket. A "Ready, Set, Wear It" event will also be taking place throughout the day. This will be in conjunction with the Great Park Pursuit.

Where: Wintergreen State Park, Hamden, CT

When: 8:30am-2pm

2. Activity: National "Ready, Set, Wear it" event, in conjunction with the US Coast Guard Open House

Where: US Coast Guard Open House, 100 Woodward Ave, New Haven, CT

When: 1pm

If you are interested in either demonstration, please contact Wendy Flynn of the DEEP Boating Division at 860-463-6177 or gwendolynn.flynn@ct.gov

Day 2--National Safe Boating Week

Dressing for water temperatures- May 17, 2015

Laws

- Between October 1 and May 31, everyone on board a manually propelled vessel (i.e. canoes, kayaks, Standup Paddle Boards, etc.) must be wearing a life properly fitting jacket at all times.

General Information

- The Boating Division recommends that everyone wear a life jacket year round when onboard a vessel.
- Connecticut is considered a cold water state, our water temperatures can vary greatly even when air temperatures are uniform. Cold water can create dangerous conditions if you suddenly become immersed. Plan on the unexpected immersion, dress for the water temperatures, not the air temperature and always wear a life jacket.
- Wearing the correct clothing can enhance your day out on the water. Below are some clothing recommendations for boating on cold water:
 - Wear moisture-wicking layer next to the skin
 - Add a layer of insulation (i.e. fleece jacket, merino wool) beneath your windproof and/or waterproof outer garments.
 - Hat (fleece-lined skullcap)/gloves (neoprene or fleece liner for warmth)
 - Wetsuits or drysuits
 - Float coats and float pants are a USCG approved specialized life jackets that will serve as a required life jacket, but also an added layer of warmth.
 - Avoid wearing cotton—it is comfortable when dry but absorbs water, dries slowly and loses its insulating value when wet.
 - For more information, visit the American Canoeing Association website: www.americancanoe.org
- If suddenly immersed in cold water; it is important to remember the 1-10-1 guideline:
 - 1 minute to get your breathing under control
 - 10 minutes of meaningful movement
 - 1 hour before you become unconscious due to hypothermia.
 - For more information about this technique and for a video, visit: http://www.coldwaterbootcamp.com/pages/1_10_60v2.html
- Although not directly related to clothing choice, another piece of safety on a manually propelled or unregistered vessel can be as simple as attaching an “If found” decal to the inside of your vessel. If a boat is found adrift or washed up on shore, a properly filled out sticker will give authorities the possibility of contacting someone before launching a search and rescue mission or gain more details that will help expedite a rescue.
- DEEP distributes the If found sticker in cooperation with the US Coast Guard. These stickers will identify your manually propelled vessel with your name and phone number.

Photo Ops

- Activity: Interview experts and see demonstrations of proper clothing and the importance of the “If found” sticker.

When: by appointment

Contacts and locations:

- **Changing Tides PaddleCraft LLC.** - Elizabeth O'Connor [changingtidespc@gmail.com], 203-903-5705
- **Clarke Outdoors, Inc** – Jenifer Clarke [clarkeoutdoors@gmail.com], 163 Route 7, West Cornwall, CT 06796, (860) 672-6365

Day 2--National Safe Boating Week

Dressing for water temperatures- May 17, 2015

- **Collinsville Canoe and Kayak** - Melissa Post [mel@cckstore.com], 41 Bridge St, Collinsville, CT 06019, (860) 693-6977
- **Downunder** - Kim Beaumont [kimb@downunderct.com], 575 Riverside Ave, Westport, CT 06880, (203) 956-6217
- **Kayak Waveology** - Greg Paquin [coach@kayakwaveology.com], 860-304-4000
- **Landfall Navigation** - Campbell Woods [campbell@landfallnavigation.com], 151 Harvard Ave, Stamford, CT 06902, (800) 941-2219
- **Sea Kayak Connecticut** - David McPherson [david@seakayakct.com], 80 Danbury Rd, Wilton, CT 06897, (203) 247-9186

Day 3--National Safe Boating Week
Operator Responsibilities- May 18, 2015

The operator is, ultimately, ***in charge*** of the vessel and responsible for:

- the safety of the entire vessel, including passengers and cargo
- the legal operation of the vessel
- actions of the passengers
- the awareness of weather , water hazards and environmental conditions

How to ensure you have a good day on the water:

- File a float plan with a reliable friend or relative. A float plan contains important information that will help get you rescued faster in something happens. This will include the type of boat you are taking, the time and place from which you are departing, who is going with you and where and when you plan to arrive. A float plan can be written or as simple as telling someone. An example of a float plan is following the topics sheet.
- Utilize a pre-departure checklist to ensure necessary safety precautions have been addressed.
- Ensure all safety equipment is onboard and in good working condition. Schedule a Vessel Safety Check.
- Ensure there is a properly fitted life jacket in good working condition to wear for each passenger. Passengers under 13 years old are required to wear a life jacket at all times except when below deck. Check for local life jacket loaner programs.
- Boat sober and wait to have a drink until you tie up.

Pre-Departure Checklist

- ✓ Check the weather forecast for the area and timeframe during which you will be boating.
- ✓ Make sure the steering and throttle controls are operating properly.
- ✓ Check that all lights are working properly.
- ✓ Check for any fuel leaks from the tank, fuel lines, and carburetor.
- ✓ Check the engine compartment for oil leaks; drain all water from the compartment.
- ✓ Check hose connections for leaks or cracks, and make sure hose clamps are tight.
- ✓ Be sure the bilge plug is replaced and secure when trailering.
- ✓ Make sure you have enough fuel (follow the 1/3 rule for fuel conservation) or know where you can refuel. The 1/3 rule is: 1/3 to reach destinations, 1/3 to return, 1/3 in reserve.
- ✓ If so equipped, make sure the ignition safety switch and wrist lanyard are in good order.
- ✓ Make sure that you have the required number of personal flotation devices and that they are in good condition.
- ✓ Leave a float plan with a reliable friend or relative.

Photo Op

Activity: Vessel Safety Check being performed on a boat will be available for viewing/recording.

Where: Spicer's Marinas, Noank, CT.

When: by appointment.

Contact: Yolanda Cooley of the DEEP Boating Division at 860-447-4343 or Yolanda.cooley@ct.gov

Day 4--National Safe Boating Week

Keep Our Water Clean-Use Pumpouts- May 19, 2015

Laws

- It is illegal to discharge boat sewage into Connecticut waters. Fines range from \$75.00 - \$25,000.00.
- Long Island and Fishers Island Sounds have been designated as No Discharge Area by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

General information

- Nutrient overloading can harm animals living in the water. Too many nutrients can cause hypoxia, which is low levels of oxygen in the water.
- No one wants to swim where they know there is raw sewage in the water. No one wants to eat raw shellfish that could be contaminated. Properly managing sewage on boats is something every boater can do right now to help improve local water quality.
- Connecticut has 98 land based pumpout facilities for servicing installed holding tanks on recreational vessels and 21 dump stations for portable toilets.
- Long Island Sound pumpout boats are located in Stamford, Branford, Clinton, Groton, Mystic River, Pawcatuck River, New London, Thames River and 1 boat on Candlewood Lake.
- Connecticut receives a Clean Vessel Act grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service grant, which is funded through motorboat fuel and fishing equipment sales.
- Last year, Connecticut received a \$1.2 million CVA grant to support these efforts.
- In 2014, 993,645 gallons were kept out of LIS and 1,623 out of Candlewood Lake.

Photo Op

- Activity: See how a pumpout is performed by new solar powered pumpout boats.
When: 8am-2pm
Where: Brewers Pilot Point Marina, located at 63 Pilots Point Dr, Westbrook, CT.
Contact: Kate Brown, DEEP CVA Coordinator, 860-447-4340 or kate.brown@ct.gov

Day 5--National Safe Boating Week

Boating Education- May 20, 2015

Laws:

- Residents of Connecticut, persons owning real property in Connecticut or persons with vessels registered in Connecticut must have either a safe boating certificate or a certificate of personal watercraft operation to legally operate any vessel with a motor, or a sailboat 19.5 feet in length or longer.
 - Exceptions to obtaining a boating certificate:
 - A person operating with an electric motor (rated at 106 lbs. of thrust or less) on inland bodies of water with a 10 hp limit between one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset. However, the vessel must be registered.
 - A person who has a valid operator's license issued by the United States Coast Guard does not require a safe boating certificate to operate a vessel (not including personal watercraft). They must have a copy of the license on board the recreational vessel on which they are operating.
- Any person operating a personal watercraft must possess either a certificate of personal watercraft operation issued by Connecticut or a reciprocal state recognized by Connecticut. (New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island).
- DEEP encourages that children be over the age of 10 to take a safe boating class, however there are specific age restrictions:
 - one must be age 16 or older, to operate a personal watercraft alone.
 - one must be age 12 or older, to operate a motorized boat greater than 10hp alone.

General Information

- These boating certificates can be obtained by:
 - successfully completing an approved 8 hour course followed by the purchase of the certificate online through the DEEP website.
 - successfully passing an equivalency exam scheduled through the DEEP Boating Division.
- If someone has a boating certificate from Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York, or New Hampshire, they may obtain an operation certificate from Connecticut by presenting proof of having obtained such a certificate at the DEEP Boating Division.
- DEEP encourages coastal boaters to seek advanced boating safety education in navigation after obtaining a certificate of operation and acknowledges this education by displaying a coastal boater's endorsement on boating certificates issued.
- Boating Safety Classes are taught in Connecticut by the DEEP Staff and volunteers as well as private providers.
- Education is the first step to being safe as a new boater.

Photo Op

- Activity: join us to view the educational displays that were created by the 2015 DEEP- Boating Division Student Ambassadors.
 - When: 9am-1pm
 - Where: Legislative Office building corridor, Hartford, CT
 - Contacts: Jerry Desmond at 860-447-4350 or jerry.desmond@ct.gov

Day 6--National Safe Boating Week

Boating Under the Influence- May 21, 2015

About Boating Under the Influence (BUI)

- Nationally, alcohol use was the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents; listed as the leading factor in 16 percent of fatalities from recreational boating accidents, according to USCG 2013 statistics.¹
- Connecticut had a total 4 BUI arrests in 2014.
- It is illegal in every state and territory to operate a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. BUI laws pertain to all vessels, from canoes and rowboats to the largest ships.
- Operating a boat with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08 or higher is against federal law and state law.
- Alcohol can impair a boater's judgment, balance, vision, and reaction time. It can increase fatigue and susceptibility to the effects of cold-water immersion.
- Sun, wind, noise, vibration, and motion – “stressors” common to the boating environment – intensify the side effects of alcohol, drugs, and some medications. These can greatly reduce the operator's coordination, judgment, and reaction time.
- Impairment can be even more dangerous for boaters than for drivers, since most boaters have less experience and confidence operating a boat than they do driving a car.
- Persons found to be boating under the influence can expect to incur penalties. If a boat operator is boating under the influence, the voyage may be terminated, the boat may be impounded and the operator may be arrested. Penalties in Connecticut include fines, jail, and loss of boating privileges.
- Alcohol is also dangerous for passengers. Intoxication can lead to slips, falls overboard and other dangerous accidents.

What is DEEP doing to reduce BUI?

- BUI training for officers (state, local, federal)
- Increasing awareness of the dangers of boating under the influence to boaters through print, social media (Facebook), and public outreach (Boat shows, public safety vessel, *Prudence*)
- Increasing enforcement patrols

Photo Op

- Activity: DEEP Environmental Conservation officer will be available for interviews.
Where: DEEP Marine Headquarters, 333 Ferry Road, Old Lyme, CT
When: by appointment
Contact: Captain Ryan Healy at 860-447-4360

¹ Source: U.S. Coast Guard *Recreational Boating Statistics 2013*

Laws

- Towed water sports are a three person sport in Connecticut, requiring a: driver, spotter, and skier/tuber. The driver must designate a person on board the vessel as an observer. This person must be at least 12 years of age. The observer shall assist the operator and monitor the progress of the water skier.
- All water skiers must be wearing a Type I, II, III or V life jacket at all times while being towed. (Inflatable life jackets are not permitted)
- Anyone operating the towing vessel must have the appropriate boating certificate.
- Water skiing in Connecticut is permitted between sunrise and ½ hour after sunset when using a boat or sunrise and sunset when using a PWC. Water skiing is not permitted when visibility is less than 100 yards.
- No person shall engage in water skiing in such a manner as to threaten to or strike any person or vessel.
- No person shall operate a vessel or manipulate a tow line or other towing device in such a manner as to cause a water skier to threaten to or strike another person or vessel.
- When towing a tube, it must have permanent handholds or covering with permanent handholds.
- Towlines cannot exceed 100 feet.

General information

- Water skiing participants should use and understand the proper hand signals used to communicate with the towing vessels operator.
- Avoid water skiing in high traffic areas.
- Vessel operators should pay attention to their surroundings at all times and look around them before making sharp turns.
- Extreme caution should be used when approaching persons in the water. When retrieving water skiers from the water, the motor should be turned off prior to the water skier approaching and boarding the boat.

Photo Op

- Activity: Lakeside Watersports will be willing to give a demonstration on safety with towed water sports.

Where: (Candlewood Lake) 16 Forty Acre Mountain Rd, Danbury, CT

When: by appointment

Contact: Chris Nuelle at 203-744-9884 or info@lakesidewatersports.com